

# Second-Hand Tips



## Second Hand Low, and (usually) Cover and Honor with an Honor.

*In general, when you play second to a trick, do not play a high card in an attempt to win the trick. Play your lowest card and leave it up to partner who plays fourth to the trick.*

1. The most basic illustration of why 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand low is crucial:

<u>Dummy</u>	
J76	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>You</u>
	K104

If declarer leads low from dummy, follow LOW with the four.  
But, if the JACK is led from dummy, cover with the KING.

	<u>Dummy</u>
	J76
<u>You</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K104	
	<u>Declarer</u>

If declarer leads low from his hand, follow LOW with the four.  
But, if the QUEEN is led from declarer, cover with the KING.

	<u>North</u>		<u>North</u>
	J76		J76
<u>West</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>East</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K104		A92	K104
	<u>South</u>		<u>South</u>
	Q853		Q853

No matter which hand declarer leads from, proper defense nets 3 tricks.



2.

Q83 

K104
975 <u>2</u>

 AJ6

South leads the two. West should play the three. After declarer plays from dummy, East will have the opportunity to win the trick as cheaply as possible.

3.

J85 

K3 <u>2</u>
Q1076

 A94

If North leads the two, East should play the four. East would like to save his ace to capture North's king.

4.

Q7654 

AK109
J3

 82

It would be pointless for West to cover South's jack. He can see that it can't promote a trick.

5.

A1076 

KJ8
3 <u>2</u>

 Q954

When South leads low, West should play 2<sup>nd</sup> hand low (smoothly, of course) to give declarer a guess.

6.

Q954 

3 <u>2</u>
KJ8

 A1076

When North leads low, East should play 2<sup>nd</sup> hand low (smoothly, of course) to give declarer a guess.

**SPLITTING HONORS** : When you have touching honors in 2<sup>nd</sup> seat, it is usually correct to play one of them.

7.

QJ8 

A102
K9 <u>7</u>

 6543

If South leads low, West should insert an honor to prevent declarer from taking 3 tricks.



**COVERING AN HONOR:** Cover any “unsupported” honor. “Unsupported” means that the honor led does not also have the card immediately lower.

8.

1076	$\begin{array}{c} \underline{J}32 \\ \square \\ AQ98 \end{array}$	K54	If North leads the jack, East should cover with the king. South can win the ace, but West’s 10 will eventually take a trick.
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9.

K54	$\begin{array}{c} \underline{J}102 \\ \square \\ A863 \end{array}$	Q97	If North leads the jack (or 10), East should play low because the jack is “supported.” West will win the king, then East will get a second trick with his Q-9 behind North’s 10. Note that a trick would be lost if East covered the jack with his queen.
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10.

54	$\begin{array}{c} \underline{J}102 \\ \square \\ A763 \end{array}$	KQ98	This time, East should cover the jack. If you have two honors higher than the one led, you should usually cover or “split” your honors.
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11.

K54	$\begin{array}{c} A32 \\ \square \\ \underline{Q}J98 \end{array}$	1076	If South leads the queen, West doesn’t know if it is “supported” or not. He should assume it is (who would lead the queen from queen-empty?)
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**SUMMARY:**

When in doubt, play 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand low (and smoothly). Covering an honor or splitting honors are exceptions (and can be complicated).